Court, Justice Krishna Iyer has objected to building of bridge of construction, at the Ramar Palam under Sethu Samudram Canal Project on the ground that such a move would be hostile to the Nation and would be detrimental to the territorial interest of India;

(b) the leading personalities who are expressing concern over the safety of Ramar Bridge demanding suspension of Sethu Project work; and

(c) the reaction and response of Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) The matter has been reported in a section of the press, however, no representation from Justice Krishan Iyer, former Judge of Supreme Court has been received by the project authorities.

(b) and (c) Representations against undertaking the project have been received. However, there is no scientific evidence regarding the existence of any ancient man-made structure in the proposed Sethusamudram Ship Channel alignment.

Widening of NH-31 in Sikkim

3935. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any project/scheme to construct two/four lane road on the existing NH-31 during the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the action taken by the Central Government to widen the above Highway in the State of Sikkim?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) to (b) 4 laning of NH-31 from Purnia (Bihar) to Chalsa (West Bengal) and Rakhaldubi to Jalukbari in Assam is already in progress as part of East-West Corridor and 4 laning of Banktiyarpur-Begusarai-Purnia has been included under

National Highway Development Project - III. There is no proposal of 4 laning the remaining length of NH-31 in view of low traffic volume. However, the entire NH-31 is having 2 lane pavement.

(d) NH-31 is not passing through Sikkim. However, widening to 2 lane with paved shoulders of the entire NH-31Afrom Sevoke to Gangtok, including West Bengal/Sikkim border to Gangtok section in Sikkim has been approved by Government for implementation in Phase TV of Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North East on BOT (Annuity) basis. National Highways Authority of India has taken action to prepare bid documents and invite bids.

Road proposals from Rajasthan

†3936. DR. PRABHATHAKUR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether certain proposals of inter-State roads of Rajasthan are lying pending with the Central Government;

(b) since when the four estimates of inter-State roads are pending with Government for technical approval and financial sanction;

(c) if so, by when the approval to proposals and sanction to estimates would be accorded by Government; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) No, Sir. A list of 12 proposals amounting to Rs. 28.85 crore have been received in the Ministry for 'in principle' approval under Inter State Connectivity (ISC) Scheme for the year 2006-07. Out of these, only six proposals amounting to Rs. 15.08 crore could be agreed-'in principle' for the year 2006-07, keeping in view inter-se-priority of works and availability of funds.

(b) At present no estimate is pending in the Ministry for technical approval and financial sanction. Out of the six proposals approved in principle for

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.